



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF ORANGE COUNTY KICKS OFF CAPITAL EXPANSION CAMPAIGN TO GROW SERVICES BY 100 PERCENT OVER A DECADE

New 52,500 Square-foot Center in Santa Ana Will Introduce a Training Facility to Better Equip “Bigs” to Help “Littles” Overcome Socio-Economic Challenges

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Sept. 18, 2014) – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County embarked on an aggressive capital campaign to purchase a building and create a training facility for at-risk youth in Santa Ana, where a quarter of “Littles” served by the nonprofit organization reside. The campaign gained immediate traction with a matching gift challenge of \$1.25M, issued by Todd and Natalie Pickup of Balboa Bay Resort and Auction.com through its chairman Rob Friedman. Both men are Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County board members. In addition, Mike Howard and Howard Building Corporation signed on as pro bono general contractors for this \$10M real estate project at 1801 E. Edinger Ave. in Santa Ana.

“A new home for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County will be the best foundation we can give the 2,000+ mentee “Littles” who come to us annually to realize their potential and build their futures,” said Melissa Beck, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County. “For the 2,000+ “Bigs” who volunteer with us each year and change the lives of children facing adversity for the better, we can give them upgraded resources to show “Littles” how to aspire higher, develop greater confidence and perform better in school. This will affect today’s youth and future generations who step through these doors.”

Irvine-based architectural firm HKS is designing a new training facility to better equip “Bigs” to serve the challenges of “Littles,” which will include a computer lab for a convenient and safe place for “Littles” to complete homework. The lab also will house the expanded Destination: College program, designed to help mentors introduce, excite and educate their “Littles” on opportunities to go to college. The goal of Destination: College is to increase the number of “Littles” who pursue college after graduating high school. As of the 2013-2014 academic year, 98 percent of “Littles” graduated from high school and 85 percent enrolled in college.

“We’re also excited to launch Destination: Health, in conjunction with the ribbon cutting of our new facility,” Beck said. “This new program for our “Littles” is intended to promote healthy living, both physically and socio-emotionally.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County expects the new center to be operational by January 2015, which will permit one of OC's largest nonprofits to grow in capacity by 100 percent over the next five to 10 years.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County

For more than 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. Most children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters live in single-parent and low-income families, or households where a parent is incarcerated. As the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"). Providing a system of ongoing evaluation and support, Big Brothers Big Sisters is proven by independent studies to help families by improving the odds that "Littles" will perform better in school and avoid violence and illegal activities, and have stronger relationships with their parents and others. Headquartered in Philadelphia with a network of nearly 400 agencies across the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters serves a quarter million children annually. In 2013, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County served more than 2,200 children. For more information, visit <http://www.bigbrooc.org/>.

###